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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2015

A new recipe

Changes are in store for the Flavours Food Festival in 2016, including a new venue in Roselawn Complex and new month
Page 2

Ingredion fined

The former owner of a Port Colborne sweetener plant was hit with a \$150,000 penalty in relation to a 2013 employee death
Page 11

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Cards capture Niagara in art and song



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/
POSTMEDIA
NETWORK
Diana
Williamson
holds one
of her note
cards she
created,
of a Port
Colborne
home, at the
store
A Raven's
Nest
in Port
Colborne.
See story
on page 6.

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UPFRONT

■ EVENTS: Port Colborne

New recipe for Flavours Food Festival

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

Things are going to be a little different at the 2016 Flavours Food Festival in Port Colborne.

The festival — which began in 2007 — attracts many food vendors, craft breweries and Niagara wineries. The 2015

event was held June 27 and 28 at H.H. Knoll Lakeview Park and saw a mere 500 visitors — a lower number than anticipated, but severe weather was likely a factor in the turnout.

Next year, the festival will be held at the Roselawn Centre grounds mid-September.

"We did an analysis, and we looked at the competing inter-

ests over the summer months with so many festivals that are pulling for the same food trucks and vendors, that come and that time of year — mid-September — there's a little more of an open time-frame for them," said Harry Hakim, manager of community services.

He said that consideration,

as well as a better venue with the ability of gating the event, went into the decision to make the move.

"Roselawn is a really neat setup right in the heart of the community," Hakim said.

Hakim brought a report to city council Monday night and was met with positivity and encouragement from

councillors.

"The Roselawn campus provides the flexibility to move aspects of the festival indoors as necessary, and yet facilitate tents, host food, craft beer and wine vendors on the grounds complemented with live local entertainment," the report said.

Hakim said the option to

move aspects inside could help the festival survive inclement weather that has devastated similar festivals in the past.

He said he is excited to continue to build the legacy of the Flavours Food Festival.

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■ INTEREST

Port senior recognized for years of volunteer work

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Lorena Saxton of Port Colborne has been volunteering for 46 years and thinks everyone should do the same. "There's a lot of society that wouldn't be going if it weren't for volunteers," she said.

In November, Saxton received the Governor General's Carling Canadian award for her years of hard work and dedication as a volunteer at Meals on Wheels and the Port Colborne hospital auxiliary gift shop.

She has been volunteering at the gift shop since 1972.

Her daughter, Wendy, nominated her for the award. Saxton said volunteering is important, and Meals on Wheels "helps people stay in their home, which everyone wants to do."

She said many people she visits enjoy the interaction. She said it gives people in need structure to their day and keeps them healthy.

With her time spent volunteering at the hospital gift

MICHELLE ALLENBERG/
POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Lorena Saxton from Port Colborne has been volunteering for 40 years at the Port Colborne Hospital Auxiliary gift shop. Saxton talks about her time at the gift shop while she fixes a bow on a gift basket.

shop, Saxton said she sees the benefit in having someone there. Besides raising money to support the hospital, the gift shop acts as a place where people can go and have their stories heard.

"It's important for these people who accompany patients to have somebody to talk to. I've been a listening ear. They don't want to be told

what to do, they want someone to listen."

She attended a ceremony in Toronto at Queen's Park, where Gov. Gen. David Johnston and Ontario Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell presented the award to Saxton and 27 other nominees.

Her message to young people is this: she knows everyone is working now and

there's not as much spare time, but any small amount spent in the community can make a difference.

"Anything anyone can do, even if they volunteer around Christmas time gathering food. Anytime anyone can do anything that doesn't have to be paid for."

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Russian hockey team to visit Port Colborne

Port Colborne will host Team Russia ahead of the IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship.

The championships are being held in St. Catharines Jan. 8-15 at Meridian Centre. The Russian team will stay and practise in the lakeside city Jan. 1-6.

Christmas card winners

Mayor John Maloney handed out awards to elementary student participants in the City of Port Colborne Christmas card competition.

The city's official Christmas card features artwork from five students. Danielle Adam, a Grade 6

student at Oakwood; Jason Zimmer, a Grade 5 student at St. Therese; Ella Scott, a Grade 5 student at St. Therese; Nathan Saltarelli, a Grade 4 student at St. Patrick; and Reese Kurtz, a Grade 5 student at Oakwood all have their submissions featured in the city's card.

Northland Ave. returns to council

A proposal to rezone the former Northland Manor came before Port Colborne city council again last Monday.

The report was submitted after concerns were raised at the Sept. 28 meeting of council about a lack of information initially provided.

Although some of council's questions were answered in the most recent report, Ward 3 Coun. Bea Kenny said it was still missing some information and motioned for the decision on the property to be deferred.

The report will come back at council's second meeting in January.

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& Whitney Pea

JAN 3

The Tartan Terrors

JAN 25

Alan Doyle
& The Beautiful Gypsies

JAN 27

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St. Catharines

LOCAL NEWS

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Shining the spotlight on Niagara

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

It could be the unseasonably mild temperatures or it could be the added attractions.

Whatever the reason, organizers are pleased residents and visitors alike are embracing the 33rd annual Ontario Power Generation Winter Festival of Lights.

"People are noticing quite a difference this year in terms of the quality and the consistency of displays throughout the destination," said John Lohuis, general manager of the Niagara Parks Commission and chairman of the festival's board of directors.

Visitation is up between 30 and 40 per cent compared to last year, he said.

"Last year, we'd had about 10,000 cars through Dufferin Islands so far," Lohuis said. "We're well over 18,000 so far this year."

Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati said pedestrian traffic is also on the rise.

"Because of the mild weather, pedestrian traffic is up and it's good news when people are out of their cars and walking around exploring our city," he said.

This year's illumination route is more than five kilometres in length and travels through Niagara Parks and into the surrounding tourist areas.

In addition to the traditional route along the Niagara Parkway, this year's festival has expanded into different areas.

The "Spirit of Niagara" sound and light show, for example, takes place at the Oakes Hotel Overlooking the Falls.

A 15-minute laser light show takes place at the top of Clifton Hill twice a night until Dec. 30.

The laser shows will also take place near the corner of Fallsview Boulevard and Main Street from Jan. 14 to Jan. 24.

Now this year is an illumination display on the

WINTER
FESTIVAL OF
LIGHTS

Nov. 21 to Jan. 31

For a full list of events, visit
www.WFOL.com

Toronto Power Generating Station which brings the building's architecture to life with a light show that is synchronized to music.

Lohuis said the festival has been admired for generations and festival stakeholders wanted to "enrich that tradition" by uniting areas of the city through lights and sound as well as looking at how other popular holiday illumination sites, such as Manhattan's Bryant Park, continue to be successful.

"Some of the fixtures used in those winter displays have been applied to the Niagara displays," he said.

The festival launched a mobile app this year that includes a "selfie" component through which people can take a picture of themselves enjoying the lights.

The app has been downloaded more than 700 times, Diodati said.

Also new this year is an interactive laser booth at Edgewaters at Queen Victoria Place.

Visitors can write a message or draw a picture that will be projected into the park using laser lights for all to see.

"We've had two or three marriage proposals already," Lohuis said.

The festival is now entering the second year of a five-year strategic plan to revamp the event.

Tourism-related agencies and businesses have committed money towards a new lighting program, which the festival board hopes will total \$1.4 million this year and \$1.2 million in 2016.

The festival attracts more than one million people each year, with 70 per cent coming from outside the region.



PHOTOS BY MIKE DUBATISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The Ontario Power Generation Winter Festival of Lights is underway in Niagara Falls. The festival features light shows, music, fireworks, dancing in soldiers, and 5km illumination route of light displays throughout the Niagara Parks and surrounding tourist districts. The festival started November 21 and runs until Jan. 31.



According to a 2014 study, those visitors contributed \$23.9 million to the local economy.

The festival was founded in 1983 by the Niagara Falls Visitor and Convention Bureau — now known as Niagara

Falls Tourism — the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Parks Commission and a number of private businesses in Nia-

gara's tourism sector.

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■ I'VE BEEN THINKING

Myriad experiences contribute to Christmas

REV. THOMAS P. ARTH

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

When Christmas time comes my thoughts often become nostalgic. I remember the Christmases and winters of my childhood. This year is the 50th Christmas of my lifetime so I've got a few to look back on.

Now I'd be lying if I said that opening presents wasn't the highlight of my Christmases as a child. To be honest, I still really enjoy opening presents and getting something to play with is much more fun and exciting than getting clothes. But to be honest I don't remember a lot of the presents that I received as a child. That's not because I'm old. It's because, ultimately, stuff doesn't matter that much.

What I do remember is people and experiences. For instance, every Christmas Eve after lunch we would go to my paternal grandparents' home. We'd spend the afternoon with my aunts and uncle and cousins and grandparents. And of course we'd see all the presents under the tree and couldn't wait to open them. But we'd have to have coffee and cake first. And before we could have coffee and cake we had to wait for my uncle to arrive. And he was always late. I think he came late on purpose, just to heighten the anticipation. For a little kid

that just seemed kind of cruel. Maybe that's an uncle thing, because as I recall when my kids were younger we were often kept waiting by my brother.

Once the afternoon with that part of the family was over we'd head to church. My mother had a cousin, Katie, who had no other family so she would come by bus on Christmas Eve, meet us at church, and spend a few days around Christmas with my maternal grandparents. After church on Christmas Eve, Katie and my grandparents would come to our house. While my mother got some coffee or tea ready and a plateful of her Christmas baking I'd sit at the piano and play some carols. I learned that Katie's favourite carol was *The First Noel* because when I played it she'd come and stand by the piano and sing along. Katie died on December 23, 2002, and at her funeral just after Christmas we sang *The First Noel*.

You might be shocked to hear that some of my Christmas memories involve the church. I can still remember the line I had at one of our Sunday school Christmas pageants. "Every Christmas Eve we gather 'round the blazing hearth to hear father read the old sweet story of the little Christ child dear." Back in the 1970s, as in most churches, the Sunday school was huge. After weeks of rehearsal we would gather on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas (I think the start time was always 3) and each class would

present a song, perhaps a short play, recite poems. The kids were a combination of excited and nervous. The parents and grandparents were glowing with pride. When it was all over the kids would line up to get their "Plickchen" (it was a German church), a bag filled with an apple, an orange, some walnuts and hazelnuts, and chocolates. I let my parents have the fruit and nuts.

I said that the highlight of Christmas was always opening presents. That's only partly true. Christmas was not Christmas without the Christmas Eve church service. The scripture readings are always the same and always have been. It's the Christmas story after all. A lot of the hymns and carols are the same every year, too. You can't do without *O Come, All Ye Faithful* and *Silent Night* after all. To be honest, I don't remember anything a pastor said in any of their sermons over the years. And most pastors I know get so worked up about what they're going to say on Christmas Eve because it's a bigger crowd than usual with some people who only come on that one night of the year. But I'm guessing that no matter how good the sermon is, it's going to be entirely forgettable for most people.

But everyone will remember the Christmas story. We get plenty of reminders about "the real meaning of Christmas." And most people around my age and younger know the story, if not from hearing it in

church, because Linus tells it so well in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Christmas is about God coming down to us, not remaining remote and detached in some heaven (wherever and whatever that is). God was born to a young couple who couldn't find a place to stay that night so that they bedded down among the animals. Angels sang God's praises to an audience of no-account shepherds. God came down and became one of us, making the stuff of life holy. God came down and experienced all the joy and sadness, elation and pain, all of the life that every human being comes to know because God became a human being when that baby, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem.

And in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus we learn to know the love, mercy, forgiveness, and grace of God that is for the whole world.

My hope and prayer for you this Christmas is that you might have some good memories of Christmases past and make some new memories. May you also know the love of God that came down in Jesus and continues to come down to us all.

And if I could make a suggestion: go to church this Christmas, even if it's the only time of year that you go, hear the story again, sing the hymns and carols, and maybe even let the preacher's sermon speak to you. May you be blessed this Christmas and always.

Shipwrecks — Robert Koch

SKIP GILLIAM
For Postmedia Network

The cement carrier *Robert Koch*, once a regular trader through the Welland Canal, was wrecked 30 years ago this month.

The vessel was inbound and under tow for the port of Oswego, N.Y., when it stranded on Dec. 15, 1985.

The ship ran over its own anchor, in the process opening up a hole in the hull that flooded the engine room and one of the cargo holds. As a result of the damage and the lateness of the season, the ship was abandoned for the winter.

Salvage got underway in July 1986 and the ship was refloated and taken to Kingston, then to Sorel and finally to



Contrecoeur, Que. Scrapping got underway at the latter location but was halted when the scrappers went out of business.

The *Robert Koch* was finally broken up at Lewis, Que., in 1990 after a career that had seen service across Europe and

across New Zealand before coming to the Great Lakes in 1977.

HANDOUT/
POSTMEDIA
NETWORK

Robert Koch is pictured at Contrecoeur, Que., in this Nov. 30, 1986, Rene Beauchamp photo.

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Jungbunzlauer welcomes its new Ingridion employees



**HANDOUT/
POSTMEDIA NETWORK**
At the fence between sites citric acid manufacturer Jungbunzlauer marks the official Dec. 16 acquisition date of its neighbouring Ingridion sweetener plant in Port Colborne. Shown are the former Ingridion employees together with the Jungbunzlauer employees, with Ingridion plant manager Marek Siczek shaking hands with Jungbunzlauer vice-president of operations Lee DiMascio.

Gators video places second

Lakeshore Catholic High School has won silver in the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association Living the Gospel Short-Video Contest for Students.

Ontario's Catholic school students in grades 4 to 12 were invited to create two-minute videos demonstrating

how their everyday actions of acceptance, love and charity reflect many of the Gospel values taught in Ontario's Catholic schools, a news release said. Close to 100 videos were created.

Lakeshore finished second in the secondary school field, sandwiched between Hamilton-Wentworth school board's first-place Cathedral Catholic High School and Toronto's Senator O'Connor College School. In the elementary division,

winning schools were from York region, first and third, and Halton. All videos can be found on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/1Ja2kSL>.

New faces for lakeshore chamber board

Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce is announcing the newest additions to its board of directors.

Serving one-year terms are Dave Brown, owner of Revitalize Solutions, and Kim Cole,

manager at A Child's World.

Three-year terms will be served by Meridian Credit Union manager Debbie Crowe, Manager, Market Café owner Connie Fancy, Prowl Communications owner Debi Katsmar, Raw Materials Co. Inc. sales representative Sarah Lacharity and Stok Construction owner Len Stolk.

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LOCAL NEWS

Holiday Waste Management Services



HOLIDAY CHANGES IN WASTE COLLECTION

Garbage, recycling and Green Bin collection will be deferred by one day on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Regular Waste Collection Day	Changed to:
Friday (Dec. 25)	Saturday (Dec. 26)
Friday (Jan. 1)	Saturday (Jan. 2)



HOLIDAY GARBAGE EXEMPTIONS

In the week following Christmas (Dec. 26, 28, 29, 30, 31), residents may place double their regular weekly garbage limit to the curb on their collection day.



CHRISTMASTREE COLLECTION

- Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016 ONLY
- Christmas trees must be at the curb by 7 a.m.
- Remove all ornaments and decorations
- Christmas trees wrapped in plastic or buried in snow will not be collected. No artificial trees.

niagararegion.ca/waste
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Niagara Region

■ ART

Music found in Niagara's historical buildings

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Local artist and world traveller Diana Williamson creates drawings of historical homes in Niagara.

Williamson has created what she calls "The Magic of Niagara" collection. She has drawn a series showcasing historical and unique houses.

Because Williamson is a songwriter she has chosen to name each of her drawings with song titles. Some of the songs she has used so far are *One of These Nights* and *Two for Tea*.

She recently drew Ingleisle, home of the first Port Colborne mayor Dewitt Carter. She named the drawing *Ruby Tuesday*. Williamson says she goes with her first instinct or gut when naming the drawings.

"She first started drawing as a way to unwind.

"It's a great escape and you can lose yourself for hours."

The Port Colborne resident, a native of Bramalea, was pulled towards houses probably because she's travelled a great deal. She lived in Los Angeles for about 15 years and has travelled to Turkey. Wil-

liamson said she thinks drawing houses has been a way for her to start "nesting."

"I've always been curious of how people design their houses. What they kind of look like inside shows their personality," she says.

Williamson said she has been living in buildings constructed in the 1920s since she first moved out of her parents home many years ago. She has always been drawn to historical buildings and loves the architecture.

"They have a charm about them. I wish the modern architects would use some of that old craftsmanship ... I find I don't want to be lost — not that I did it with that in mind, but there are a lot of gorgeous buildings in Niagara," Williamson says.

The houses jump out at her when she drives around and she takes photos of the ones she really likes. She then draws them and creates notecards with the drawings.

Williamson draws mostly in ink and does custom work as well.

The notecards can be purchased at A Raven's Nest in Port Colborne or at www.dianawilliamsonstudios.com.

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What's open and closed at Christmas

Most stores and services will be closed for the holidays, and most will close early Christmas Eve.

LCBO and Beer Store outlets will be open until 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve and be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Most major retailers will close early Christmas Eve. Some will reopen early on Boxing Day.

Banks will be closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

There will be no mail delivery Friday.

Friday's collection of garbage, recycling and organic waste will instead be on Boxing Day — when curbside waste limits will be doubled and for the following Monday to Thursday, Christmas tree pickup is on Saturday, Jan. 9, starting 7 a.m.

■ CHARITY

Region matches \$25,000 in donations to refugees

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region extended a helping hand to Syrian refugees expected to soon call the area home.

Following through on a commitment made by council in early October, Regional Chairman Alan Caslin delivered a \$25,000 cheque to Mennonite Central Committee, matching dollar for dollar donations the community has made.

The money will support resettlement of refugees in Niagara and go toward rent, food and other necessities. Three Syrian families are expected to arrive in the area before the end of December, with more to follow.

Caslin, who requested the funding commitment at the Oct. 1 meeting of council, received unanimous support to use up to \$25,000 from the chairman's office budget toward the cause.

Community donations have since topped \$30,000.

Caslin praised the generosity of Niagarans and credited groups who have stepped in "ready to assist, support and respond to the refugee crisis."

"Our community continues to play a leading role in the compassionate response to Syrian refugees, and it is a testament to our residents, our social sector and our civic government that this

amount was raised so quickly," he said.

Caslin also challenged Niagara's municipalities to make contributions to the cause, to which the Town of Pelham responded with a \$1,000 commitment. Asked if others had followed suit, he responded "there's still time."

Central committee refugee program co-ordinator Moses Molni said both the community and the Region have stepped up "in an incredible way."

"I can't say how grateful, how filled with awe and thankfulness we are. The outpouring of generosity is overwhelming."

The funds will assist groups that are short on financial resources but interested in sponsoring families, he said.

"You never know what a matching challenge will do," committee Ontario executive director Rick Cober Bauman said, calling Niagara "inspiring" for its quick response.

Niagara, he said, is the only region in Ontario that used a matching strategy with municipal funds to encourage donations from the community.

Those dollars, he said, will help put Syrian families headed to the area on a path to success.

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■ POLICING

Uber drivers still under microscope

TONY RUCIUTO
Postmedia Network

No Uber drivers have been charged since they entered the Niagara market last month.

This, despite Niagara Regional Police putting the company on notice their drivers could be charged for not being properly licensed.

"We are in the process of conducting investigations, and will respond to complaints, and we will also start to do some investigative work if we find out they are working outside of the bylaw," said police Chief Jeff McGuire following last Thursday's monthly Police Services Board meeting in St. Catharines.

Uber, the peer-to-peer, ride-sharing program arranged through a mobile phone app, was the subject of discussion during November's board meeting. It was talked about again last Thursday. It's an issue that is expected to be revisited during future meetings because more information is being collected and many questions about the service remain unanswered.

Some of those questions were addressed last Thursday by Matthew Dams, president of the International Association of Taxi Regulators. He's also a lawyer from New York City, who has done considerable research on transportation regulations and laws, regulatory compliance and what regulators have experienced with the entry of new transportation network companies.

Dams was brought in to speak to the board by Marc Andre Wray, president of the Canadian Taxi Association. Wray is also the chief operating officer at Coventry Connections, which has taxi and transportation interests in Niagara.

Dams said Uber is "a really cool idea" because everything can be done using a smart phone, but it's also a controversial issue. There are 40 lawsuits in the United States alone, and some countries in Europe have tried to shut Uber down.

In Germany, Dams said, Uber was outlawed and shut down for not being licensed.

It's not an issue in Australia because the country has rules that say a taxi has to provide a service quickly and Uber is unable to comply with the rules because there are not enough drivers.

In Canada, Dams said the situation is still in flux. The payment of tax has also raised because companies here have to submit the T87.

On the issue of background checks, Dams said that in the United States Uber conducts its own. The company will sometimes check court records for a driver's name, but if someone changes their name poses a problem. Sometimes passengers end up with a good driver, sometimes not.

The industry is also trying to come up with ways to deal with the matter. A driver will have their own insurance, but Uber will sometimes provide "umbrella insurance" that provides global coverage.

In Niagara, the taxi industry is regulated by the police service through its licensing department. For someone to provide transportation of passengers for compensation under the bylaw, a special licence is required.

Uber drivers who do not have that licence can be charged under the bylaw which carries a fine of about \$350.

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■ TRANSPORTATION: Central Taxi meeting tech-savvy clients 'desires'

Taxi app drives competition

RAT SPITERI
Postmedia Network

With more competition than ever, traditional taxi companies are upping their game when it comes to customer service.

As Uber entered the Niagara market last month with its peer-to-peer ride-sharing program using a mobile phone app, Central Taxi is upgrading its app to include a new text booking service.

The new service allows people to send an address to the normal Central Taxi booking number — 905-685-7343 — and receive a text message back to confirm that booking on an automated basis.

The app is expected to be upgraded in time for Christmas Day to include a pay-through-the-app feature. The new addition will allow users to register and pay via credit card.

The app tracks drivers in real time on

the interactive map, and allows customers to rate their ride. Customers can pre-book a taxi, which is a feature unique to Central Taxi.

"I believe giving clients choices that meets their needs and desires is the way of the future," said Daniel Coates, spokesman of Coventry Connections.

Coventry took over Central Taxi in 2010. "We want to give customers options to suit their specific preferences or needs," said Hani Patni, president of Central Taxi.

"Hailing cabs can now be done using the app or through texting us a pickup address, but customers can still use all the traditional methods such as calling, online booking or use curbside stands.

"It's all about options and modernizing the way we do business."

The Central Taxi app can be downloaded from the iTunes store, Google Play or by visiting centralniagarataxi.com.



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HOLIDAY

St. Catharines woman's photo breastfeeding with Santa goes viral

BOB TYMCZYK/STYNN
Postmedia Network

A St. Catharines mother found herself in the spotlight after a photograph of her nursing her child with Santa went viral on the internet last week.

The mother of three said it was a spontaneous decision to take the photo at Niagara Square shopping mall in Niagara Falls.

"I was standing in line, and my one son is the type that if he doesn't eat when he's decided he has to eat he turns into a little monster," said Rebecca.

"He will scream and throw himself on the floor and throw a little temper tantrum."

Rebecca said she was two people away from being next in line when she decided to begin nursing him. "I thought, wouldn't it be funny to take a nursing picture on Santa's lap?"

She asked the photographer, and he said he would check with Santa, who was



OK with the photo.

"I'm just very pro-breast," she stressed. "I like to normalize breast-feeding, and I do know that sitting on Santa's lap is not normal for breastfeeding."

"It was kind of tongue-in-cheek, just being a little bit silly, just saying let's have a cute picture."

"I think it turned out hilarious with Santa making the face."

Rebecca posted it so her friends could see it and said she didn't mind if they

shared the photo because she loves the picture believes that breastfeeding is normal.

"I'm very covered; you see a lot of people with a lot more showing," she said at her home with her husband and children.

"It's not me trying to get attention to have my breast stuck out. I didn't expect it to become that viral, or I probably would not have posted it online."

Rebecca said it didn't dawn on her that it would

BOB TYMCZYK/STYNN
Postmedia Network

Rebecca and husband Al are surprised by the attention a Santa photo has garnered after she posed for the photo with her son while breastfeeding. The St. Catharines resident shared the photo with friends who shared the photo online. From left are Caleb who was in the photo, five year-old Jacob and Caleb's twin Willen.

cause some much controversy.

"In my mind, it shouldn't

cause much comment one way or the other. Breastfeeding should be so accepted

that no one should feel the need to comment."

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Niagara Catholic trims to balance budget

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Niagara Catholic District School Board is submitting to the province a projected balanced budget of \$255 million for the end of school year in August.

Business superintendent Giancarlo Vetrone told trustees last Tuesday night a recovery plan begun in December 2014 "has been fully implemented."

It's a multi-year plan to eliminate a board over-expenditure that grew out of unexpected spending in 2014. Education director John Crocco said Wednesday the over-expenditure was the result of a decline in enrolment and an increase in costs.

"Budgets are a plan, a path and must remain flexible throughout a school year

to take into account multiple factors from enrolment changes, revenue, expenditures, risk management and contingency planning," he said by e-mail.

"During 2014-2015, Niagara Catholic experienced a slight decline in enrolment which reduced revenue from the Ministry of Education combined with additional cost pressures associated with increases in utilities, benefits and snow removal expenditures during the year."

Among the areas were board administration and special education spending. "Special education funding is a protected financial envelope by the province," said Crocco.

"Historically, Niagara Catholic has and continues to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars more than allocated by the Ministry of Education

for special education students in our board."

Board administration now sits at \$453,120, the lowest it has been, said Vetrone.

Crocco said "board administration" is a budget line that captures expenditures assigned to the central office facility.

It includes, he said, "all board overhead costs along with support staff to process the administrative functions for about 3,400 full- and part-time staff and 73 facilities throughout the board."

To bring the budget back in balance, Niagara Catholic cut staff numbers to meet a decline in enrolment.

"As part of the decrease in population demographics and the changing economy affecting families throughout the Niagara region," said Crocco, "Niagara Catholic continued with a slight decline in stu-

dent enrolment."

Through retirements and leaves in 2015-16, however, "currently all teaching staff are employed by the board."

At Tuesday's board meeting, Vetrone reported revised estimates based on up-to-date enrolment figures for Niagara Catholic's 57 schools.

The Ministry of Education requires the revision. Boards can take into account enrolment projections based on current data. The bulk of a school board's funding comes from grants based on daily attendance figures.

Niagara Catholic has 21,738 students with 14,488 in 49 elementary schools and 7,250 in eight high schools.

Its revised estimate is now 21,960 students for each day during 2015-16. That level would require 11 more teachers for a total of 1,328 and nine more assistants for 423.



Schools prepare for Syrian refugees

Niagara Catholic District School Board has sent out a call to staff and anyone who can help with the arrival of Syrian refugee families coming to the area.

Education director John Crocco brought the board up to date recently night on preparations. A number of parishes in the region are sponsoring refugee families.

The young people when they arrive will receive Ontario education numbers which will make them eligible to enter school.

Some of these students have not been in school for three or more years while living in refugee camps, he said.

Crocco said he met

with school principals last Thursday and they are prepared for arrivals. The schools have people who speak Arabic and are looking for more.

The former St. Thomas Moore School will be used to store furniture and other donated materials for use by arriving families.

With the arrival of 10,000 refugees in Canada by Dec. 31 and 25,000 by the end of February, Ontario could receive 14,000.

"Just to put it into perspective," said Crocco, "Ontario normally receives 10,000 newcomers in a year."

Pay for trustees dips

The honorarium for Niagara Catholic trustees for 2015-16 was adjusted slightly downward by the school board.

The chair will receive \$16,825, down from \$16,846, and the vice-chair \$13,775, down from \$13,788. The remaining six trustees will be paid \$10,710, down from \$10,803.

Under the Education Act, the honorarium is adjusted each year in relation to the changes of enrolment in the previous year.

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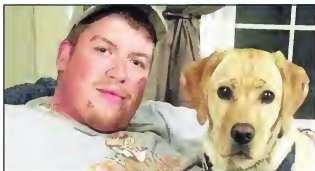
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LOCAL NEWS

COURT



FILE PHOTO

Ingredion Canada Inc. has been fined \$150,000 in the November 2013 death of its Port Colborne employees Dan Gilmore, shown in this photo from Facebook.

Ingredion fined \$150,000 in worker's death

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

A \$150,000 fine has been levied against Ingredion Canada Inc., after it pleaded guilty in the death of a 28-year-old worker who was crushed at its Port Colborne plant while riding a railcar more than two years ago.

The sentence was handed down last week in provincial court in St. Catharines by Justice of the peace Mary Shelley — the same day the plant's sale to neighbouring citric acid plant Jungbunzlauer became final.

On Nov. 8, 2013, Dan Gilmore was crushed between the railcar he was riding and a steel beam. He died 10 days later at Hamilton General Hospital.

Gilmore had been a volunteer Wal-Mart firefighter since 2008 and was engaged to be married at the time of his death.

The Ministry of Labour laid three charges against Ingredion under the Occupational Health and Safety Act following an eight-month investigation.

Ingredion's Invertoe Drive corn wet-milling plant has a company-owned rail spur that allows railcars to be loaded with its fructose sweeteners.

A ministry news release said two workers are involved in the movement of railcars at the facility. One worker operates the Trackmobile, the other ensures the path is clear for moving cars and is also responsible for engaging and disengaging the hand brake, located at the end of a railcar.

It was a common practice for a worker to ride on the railcar being moved along the spur and through buildings, and was standard procedure for a worker to ride on a fixed ladder on the south side of the

railcar, where there were no obstructions or clearance issues.

There was no written procedure that dealt with the riding of railcars.

Gilmore was riding on the fixed ladder when he struck a steel post below a gangway and was squeezed between the post and the rail car.

Ingredion pleaded guilty to failing as an employer to ensure measures and procedures prescribed by section 12 of Regulation 851 (the Industrial Establishments Regulation) were carried out.

Specifically, the clearance between moving railcars and the stationary posts of the loading platform in the building was not sufficient to ensure the safety of workers in the area was not endangered, and a worker was killed.

Claire Regan, Ingredion director of corporate communications, said last Tuesday the company "entered into a settlement to fully resolve the charges" it faced.

She said since the incident, Ingredion has implemented safety measures put forth by the province not just at the Port Colborne plant but all of its facilities globally.

"Safety is our highest priority," she said.

In addition to the \$150,000 fine, court imposed a 25 per cent victim fine surcharge required by the Provincial Offences Act, which is directed to a government fund to assist victims of crime.

The sentencing came the same day the plant's sale to Jungbunzlauer became final.

Regan said the sale was unrelated to the accident.

—with Tribune files

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MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS: Niagara Falls started recording closed-door meetings after complaint filed

Tape closed-door meetings, councils told

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

All municipalities should keep a digital recording of their closed-door meetings. Ontario's ombuds

It's a good safeguard for their own protection, so that there's an accurate record of what was discussed.

*It's tremendously important to have an accurate record of what was discussed behind closed doors

so the independent investigator can judge whether the discussions were legal and permitted by the (Municipal) Act or not," said acting ombudsman Barbara Finlay.

Currently, there are only 17 out of 444 municipalities that make digital recordings of their closed-door meetings.

*That number is just not acceptable, it's too low. I would like to see better record keeping," said Finlay, who released the 2014-15 report on the work of the Ombudsman's

Open Meeting Law Enforcement
Team.

In May, Niagara Falls city council decided to audio record its closed-door meetings.

Recording meetings and archiving them for future reference was one of five recommendations Ontario ombudsman Andre Marin had for Niagara Falls council after he ruled a closed-door meeting in 2013 was illegal.

Council decided to approve using an audio recorder, as opposed to

video recording, which could have cost up to \$20,000.

The provincial watchdog had also received a complaint about a meeting held in Niagara Falls on April 28 to consider whether to continue opening public council meetings with a prayer.

Two weeks before the complaint was filed, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of a Saguenay, Que., resident, who felt his freedom of religion was violated when a prayer was recited before

politicians held a public meeting in that city.

Since then, the practice has been discontinued by many other municipalities, including Niagara Falls, which now opens its meetings with someone singing *O Canada*.

This was the fourth annual report by the ombudsman's office on its investigations of closed meetings in municipalities across the province.

Finlay also discussed changes that will take place after Jan. 1, when her office will be able to help the public with concerns about any aspect of municipal government, from garbage and snow removal, to social programs, to conduct of councillors.

Finlay said the Ombudsman's Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team handled about 800 complaints about closed meetings in the past eight years, with the last year being particularly active. Between September 2014 and August 2015 it reviewed 85 meetings held by 61 municipalities. The ombudsman deemed 16 meetings "illegal" — that is, they did not meet the open-meeting requirements of the Municipal Act — and found 40 procedural violations. And in another 15 reports issued since August, the team reviewed 30 meetings in 13 additional municipalities, with the ombudsman finding seven illegal meetings and 23 procedural violations.

Finlay said a few familiar issues continue to crop up, such as informal gatherings of council members that sometimes veer into discussing business. And a few new ones have surfaced, including exchanges of e-mails that become illegal "meetings" when councilors use them to make decisions away from public view.

"The ombudsman is an office of last resort. We are not here to replace local complaint mechanisms or accountability officers," she said. "In fact, all municipalities should have their own. We will be there to ensure local mechanisms operate fairly, follow best practices and are operating as intended. We will be able to step in where local officers fail or simply cannot go, as well as tackle broader systemic issues, just as we do at the provincial level."

The ombudsman's office is an independent office of the Ontario legislature that resolves and investigates public complaints about provincial government bodies.

Besides municipalities, Bill 8 also extends ombudsman oversight to school boards (as of Sept. 1) and universities (as of Jan. 1).

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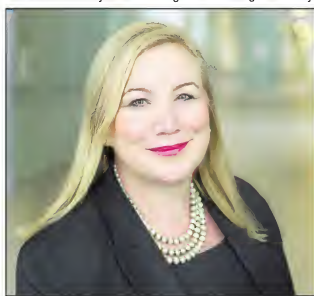
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■ **UNIVERSITY:** Wedny Cukier is also a grad from the Niagara university



Brock names first female president

GRANT LAFLECHE
Postmedia Network

In some ways, Brock University still feels like home for Wendy Cukier.

A drastically remodelled home, but still familiar.

"It's still Brock, but I will admit I couldn't find my way to Schmon Tower when I was last there," she said of Brock's most iconic building. "I could see it above the other buildings, but I did not know how to get there."

Cukier, who graduated from Brock with degrees in history and English in 1979, will have to learn her way around quickly. She was named the school's new president, replacing outgoing president Jack Lightstone.

"What I loved about Brock when I was a student were the core values, many of which focused on the student experience," said Cukier, currently vice-president of research and innovation at Ryerson University in Toronto. "Obviously, a great deal has changed, but those core values remain intact."

She becomes Brock's first female president, and is also the first graduate of the university to hold the position.

At Ryerson, Cukier said she finds research opportunities for students and researchers as well as securing funding. It's a skill set she thinks will mesh well with Brock's increasing focus on research.

She said she isn't coming to Brock with plans to radically reshape the school's focus.

"I think someone coming in from

the outside has to be very careful about showing up and saying they are going to change the direction of the institution," Cukier said. "Instead, I think the role of the president is not to change the direction the institution is moving in, but to enhance what the university is already doing."

In particular, she wants to raise Brock's profile.

"One of the things I encounter often when I talk about Brock is, 'Where is Brock?'" Cukier said, saying she wants people to think about Brock when they think about Niagara, and to build on the university's relationships with institutions in Toronto.

Although Cukier graduated from Brock in 1979 before moving on to earn a masters, MBA and a PhD at other institutions, she has remained connected to Niagara.

Her stepfather still lives in St. Catharines, she said, so she visits the region often.

Her work to assist the settlement of Syrian refugees in Toronto also ended up having a connection to Brock.

She started a program called Life-line Syria Challenge at Ryerson to raise money for privately sponsored Syrian refugees, effectively copying a model she used in the 1970s to help Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada.

Cukier will assume her post at Brock University on Sept. 1.

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NATIONAL POST

THE TRIBUNE

■ SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO: Honours for Sgt. Mike McAllister



ALISON LANGLEY/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A veteran of the Niagara Regional Police has been recognized for his contribution to the Special Olympics movement. Sgt. Mike McAllister, currently assigned to the court services unit in St. Catharines, received the 2015 Rob Plunkett Law Enforcement Torch Run Award at an awards ceremony recently in Toronto.

Niagara cop carrying the torch

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

When the Ontario Law Enforcement Torch Run first came through Niagara Falls in 1987 to raise funds for Special Olympics, rookie cop Mike McAllister answered the call to help.

"The way I describe it to people is I was 'volun-told' to be a part of this," he said with a laugh, recalling the moment the then-police chief asked him to co-ordinate the inaugural run simply because he had previously taken part in a torch run in advance of the Calgary Olympics.

The experience, he says, changed him forever.

"I found it so rewarding that I didn't need to be told again," the sergeant said.

"Special Olympics is so near and dear to my heart."

As the torch run program in Ontario grew, McAllister recruited other local Niagara law enforcement agencies to assist and participate including RMCP, Niagara Parks and Canada Border Services Agency.

Since it began, the torch run has raised more than \$26 million in donations and brought awareness to the Special Olympics movement.

"When we started this, there were less than 4,000 athletes registered in Ontario," McAllister said.

Today, there are more than 20,000. All funds raised through torch run events are directed into Special Olympic Ontario community programs and also helps to subsidize athlete expenses various such as travel and accommodations.

McAllister, currently assigned to the court services unit in St. Catharines, is always searching for new and sustainable fundraising ideas for the Special Olympics.

He launched a motorcycle run in Niagara and has assisted with truck convoys, endurance mud runs and polar plunges across the province.

The 33-year police veteran was recently

recognized for his involvement with Special Olympics movement at an awards ceremony in Toronto hosted by Special Olympics Canada.

McAllister was the 2015 Rob Plunkett Law Enforcement Torch Run Award.

The national award is presented to a torch run representative who best exemplifies the spirit, philosophy, dedication and goals of the run and the Special Olympics movement.

The award is named in memory of Det. Const. Robert Plunkett, a member of York Regional Police who lost his life in the line of duty in August 2007.

"The award was very humbling to me," McAllister said.

"I knew Rob, he was a great guy ... larger than life."

Plunkett was also involved with Special Olympics and co-ordinated the torch run for York Regional Police.

McAllister says he's proud to continue Niagara's strong connection with Special Olympics.

In the early sixties, testing of children with intellectual disabilities revealed that they were only half as physically fit as their non-disabled peers. It was assumed that their low fitness levels were a direct result of their disabilities.

A St. Catharines native, Dr. Frank Hayden, who was working in Toronto as a researcher and professor at the time, questioned that assumption.

Working with a control group of children on an intense fitness program, he demonstrated that, given the opportunity, intellectually disabled people could become physically fit and acquire the physical skills necessary to participate in sport.

"He discovered that people with disabilities benefit greatly from physical activity and team sports," McAllister said.

Hayden's work came to the attention of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, D.C., and led to the creation of Special Olympics.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ PUBLIC HEALTH

Niagara vaccination rates climb

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Vaccination rates in Niagara climbed substantially in 2015 after an extensive review conducted by public health.

The findings were presented in a report to Niagara Region's public health and social services committee.

"The vaccination review is extremely effective, which is why we do it," medical officer of health Dr. Valerie Jaeger said following the meeting.

As a result of the initiative, many of Niagara's immunization numbers are now "in the area where we feel we have community immunity, which is our public health goal," she said.

The annual review, conducted manually by public health staff, included the immunization records of more than 62,000 students from across Niagara. Of those records, more than 14,000 were found to be incomplete.

Those numbers were due in part to legislation changes in July 2014 that added a meningitis, whooping cough and chickenpox vaccines to the list required for school attendance, said Angela Alfieri-Makalo, manager of the Region's vaccine preventable disease program.

As a result of the legislative changes and the inability to conduct a review in 2014, the 2015 review was one of the largest campaigns undertaken by public health.

First notices requesting that records be updated were sent to households in January.

To assist families in getting children up to date, immunization clinics were held at all area high schools, various public health offices and in a number of community locations.

Those who did not comply or make contact with public health were issued a second notice in April, warning of possible suspension from school the following month. If records were not updated, suspensions for incomplete records can last a maximum of 20 days, but students are permitted to return to school once vaccinations are updated.

On May 12, 1,674 Niagara students were formally suspended.

That number dropped considerably, to 700, by Day 2.

At the end of the maximum 20-day stretch, only 16 names remained on the list.

Those children remain in the public health system as having records that are not up to date, Jaeger said. If there was an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, those children would be removed from affected schools.

The review offers an additional opportunity for public health nurses to discuss with parents any concerns they may have regarding vaccinations, Jaeger said.

"Sometimes we address the concerns and the questions are answered, but even after that parents do have the right to sign a conscientious objection," she said.

"The rates of that are about two per cent."

Public health's main message is that "vaccines are safe and they work," Jaeger said.

"From a personal standpoint, I had measles. My children had the shot. The shot is better."

Jaeger used the local measles outbreak in February as an example of the effectiveness of community vaccination.

"It started in a closely-knit group of five initial cases, but we didn't have any spread," she said, while stressing that measles are highly contagious.

"That would not have happened if we hadn't already gotten about a 95 per cent coverage rate for measles."

Prevention only works ahead of time, Jaeger said, which is why vaccinations for a variety of diseases are required even when "there's no visible threat on the horizon."

"It is probably our single most effective public health intervention that we do and it is one of the few health interventions that is cost-saving to the health-care system."

When the reviews are underway, public health often finds students have been vaccinated, but the organization has not been notified.

Many parents think records are automatically updated through family doctors, but that is not the case, Alfieri-Makalo said. She urged people to report any vaccinations changes directly to public health.

For busy parents who may have had the booster updates slip their mind, the review acts as a reminder, she said.

Jaeger called it "absolutely crucial" for public health to be aware of who is vaccinated and who is not, so the appropriate students can be removed from school should an outbreak occur.

Public health recognizes that immunization records can be confusing with the many shots that are required, Jaeger said.

Sometimes parents may think their child is up to date, when in fact they aren't, she said.

She asked that anyone who receives a notice regarding updating records to get in touch with public health, regardless of whether they think their child is up to date.

"This way we can verify the situation and you can verify the situation."

Work is currently underway to prepare for the 2016 review, which gets underway in January.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **TOURISM:** Burland family has owned a chunk of prime Niagara Falls real estate since 1925

decades on Clifton Hill

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

Even after 90 years of tourism being in the family, it still doesn't "sink in" for Charlie Burland that he owns a good chunk of Clifton Hill.

"This place is like a child, it's like raising a kid that never leaves home," says the president of Niagara Clifton Group, which owns about half of the north side of the popular tourist strip.

"It is a living entity and it needs to be taken care of all the time. I don't take many vacations."

In September, Burland's family celebrated nine decades in business.

In 1925, his grandfather, Charles Inglis Burland, purchased the property that is now the Travelodge hotel on Clifton Hill. That was after he rented tree houses to people off Highway 8 in Grimsby.

That doesn't work too well, so he came down to see what was going on in Niagara Falls, ended up buying the property in 1925, says Burland. "It was just a field. He ran it as a campground, eventually built cottages and then a 10-unit motel in the early '50s."

"He passed away relatively young and then my father (Charles Dudley Burland), his sister (Mary Anne Paul) and brother (Noel), they started building more motel rooms, gift shops, restaurants and retail, which is basically what sits on the property today."

Burland says he took over in the 1980s. Niagara Clifton Group, which also owns a number of attractions, has 250 employees.

Burland's cousin, Ian Paul, also owns property on the same side of Clifton Hill.

Burland says his grandfather bought the property where the Travelodge now sits using "my grandmother's family money" for \$14,000. Burland's grandmother was Barbara Musson Burland.

My grandmother and my dad, my aunt and uncle were all born in Bermuda," says Burland.

Burland was born in Grimsby. He was in the Cana-



MIKE DIAMANTIS/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Charlie Burland's family has been operating businesses on Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls for 90 years. Burland is president of the Niagara Clifton Group, running about 20 businesses on the north side of Clifton Hill. They started adding motels in the 1970s and 1980s.

dian Navy and he was stationed in Bermuda during the war, so he would have met my grandmother down there.

"They kind of lived separate lives. My grandfather, he spent his time up here, playing with this company, and my grandmother stayed down there."

The one side of Clifton Hill could have turned out very differently had Burland's father taken his grandmother's advice following his grandfather's death.

"My grandfather ... died in Stockholm, Sweden. My grandmother, who lived in Bermuda, told my dad to go to Stockholm and bring your father back, and sell the property in Niagara Falls, and come back to Bermuda," says Burland.

"That was the plan, except my dad said, 'I don't think it's a good idea to sell the property in Niagara Falls, on Clifton Hill.' He says, 'I think that we can make a go of it and we should keep it.'"

Burland says the family got into building attractions during the late 1970s.

"The attractions have been a large focus since then."

Burland says he started selling strawberries on Clifton Hill with two friends when he was seven years old. He moved on to putting stickers on merchandise in a stock room to fixing

machines and giving people change at an arcade. He worked in maintenance, a haunted house, as well as restaurants and motels along Clifton Hill.

"Dad always said there would always be three good years, three bad years and three mediocre years," says Burland when asked about the ebbs and flow of the tourism industry.

"That seems to be the case. Everything has to do with weather and the U.S. exchange."

"We've had, as everyone in the industry does, that the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, which led to increased border security and document requirements, had a detrimental impact on business."

"We've had 13 really bad years and this year has been the first decent, good year since Sept. 11."

Burland says when his dad was running the family business, along with his brother and sister, they basically closed up every winter and went south.

"They would keep a couple people on."

While Clifton Hill remains open during the winter these days, Burland acknowledges the strip remains primarily a summer destination.

Before Sept. 11, if the weather was good, Clifton Hill would see

strong visitation for six months. But after 2001, "It went right back down to 100 days," says Burland.

"We got to cover the business for 365 days when we only make revenue out of 100 of the days," he says. "Ninety per cent plus of our revenue comes in the 100 days."

Despite all the external factors, Burland says his upbringing has helped him and the company grow the business.

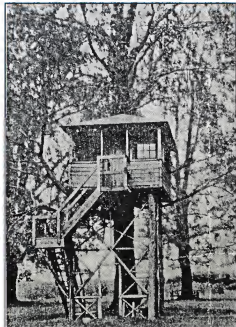
"I guess we'd we've been able to weather the storms is the fact that we've owned the land and we've owned the land for a very long time. We try not to take on much debt because my father and my grandfather, they've been through the Great Depression. Growing up as a son of an accountant, you tend to be raised in a cautious fashion."

He says the keys to his company's success have been location and good employees.

"Next to the asset of the land and the location, it's the employees that are the second most valuable asset that the company has."

Burland says he hears some people describe Clifton Hill as "lucky ... but that's what it is, that's why people come."

"Why do people go to Port Dover on Friday the 13th? Because that's the place to be. If you want to go to some neat



MIKE DIAMANTIS/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Charlie Burland's family has been operating businesses on Clifton Hill in Niagara Falls for 90 years. Burland is president of the Niagara Clifton Group, running about 20 businesses on the north side of Clifton Hill. This is a photo of the tree house cottages his great grandfather started the business with in the 1920s.

place that you can't find anywhere else in Canada, it's Niagara Falls, Clifton Hill."

Asked how and why Clifton Hill has become a madhouse of activity, Burland gives much credit to his counterpart on the other side of the strip, Harry Oakes.

Oakes is president of Hoco Limited, which owns and operates many attractions, restaurants and shops on the south side of the street.

"He's the one who is the visionary over them and on our side, it would have been my dad, he would have been the visionary who figured things out," says Burland.

Burland says he and Oakes work well together.

"I've had the opportunity to be able to sit across the street and watch what he has done. In a way, he has been a mentor of mine."

Burland has been around long enough to see another tourism area develop in Niagara Falls.

There's Fallsview and there's Clifton Hill. Fallsview, I think, has spent a lot of time concen-

trating on the gamblers, with the casinos, where Clifton Hill, we still keep going back to the families."

While Burland acknowledges there's a level of competition between the Clifton Hill and Fallsview areas, they also share some things in common.

"Pretty well all the operations in Niagara Falls are family run," he says. "That seems to be the key."

Burland is the third generation to work in the family business.

"I have three young sons and two of them work in the company, so the fourth generation is now working in the company," he says.

Burland is 48 years old and says when he turns 65, he'll see whether his children are able, or willing, to carry on the family business, or whether it will be sold.

"Having this golden goose, this little thing sitting here is a really nice lifeboat to have for the kids."

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LOCAL NEWS

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■ RELIGION: Catholic board chair reflects on dealings with future saint

'The world needs more Mother Teresas'

WAYNE CAMPBELL

Special to Postmedia Network

Rev. Paul MacNeil has a personal connection with Mother Teresa.

The chair of Niagara Catholic District School Board worked with her and her advice guided him.

"I just heard the great news and I'm overjoyed," he said Friday about Pope Francis's plans to declare Mother Teresa a saint.

"I met Mother Teresa in 1992 when I was a volunteer with her missionaries of charity in Kolkata (then Calcutta)," he said of his two-month experience.

"Like many volunteers, I saw her on a daily basis. I also heard her speak at length several times, and on one occasion had a lengthy private conversation with her."

He described her as perhaps happiest person he ever met, "most certainly the

strongest."

Mother Teresa "taught me the nature of holiness, which is simply love."

A few years after his talk with her, MacNeil returned to his studies for the priesthood. He had left to teach in Asia.

MacNeil said Mother Teresa's message was consistent, something she would say over and over again.

"In everything you do, especially the smallest things, do it with great love."

The board chair said the world needs to hear that.

"The world needs more Mother Teresas."

MacNeil grew up in St. Catharines. He recently became the pastor of Our Lady of the Scapular parish in Niagara Falls, moving from St. Ann's in Pelham.

He represents Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln and Pelham on the school board.

■ ATTRACTION

Rink at the Brink off the market

TONY RICCIUTO

Postmedia Network

With no purchaser in sight, the Rink at the Brink has been put on ice.

The outdoor rink which opened in 2009 and was set up on Niagara Parks land across the street from Table Rock and the Horseshoe Falls, will be advertised again early next year.

The outdoor facility, which is owned by the Ontario Power Generation Winter Festival of Lights, was put on the auction block last year. Initially, Niagara-on-the-Lake had shown an interest in buying the rink, but that deal failed to materialize.

John Lohuis, who was appointed in September as chairman of the lights festival, said the rink was taken off the market after the prior process failed to get them the results they had hoped for.

The rink and related equipment, which cost \$220,400 to purchase, experienced a number of weather-related problems while it was in operation. Adverse weather conditions and mist from the Horseshoe Falls would cause a quick build up of ice that made for a rough skating surface.

"The rink was less than efficient and there were a lot of issues that ultimately created an operating loss of anywhere between \$50,000 and \$70,000 a year, even when you had a cold winter," said Lohuis.

And with the warm weather we are

experiencing this year, he added, it would have been another difficult year of operation.

Lohuis said they have a plan to advertise the rink on a bid site online in March and it will have a reserve bid of \$32,000.

"We would not proceed if it got below that amount," he said. "Material of this nature does depreciate fairly rapidly and you have things like skates, helmets, plastic piping, glycol, refrigeration condensers and compressors do devalue with time, so the market will tell us what it is worth."

Last year, the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake had expressed an interest in the rink with a suggested purchase price of \$38,000. Some councillors were concerned over the operating costs, which had been estimated at more than \$100,000.

Lohuis said they have provided information to five potential buyers who had shown interest in the rink in case they want to reconsider it again when it gets relisted for sale.

He remains confident the rink will be sold and if it is listed early on the new year it will give potential buyers time to plan on how they might wish to use it.

"I'm hopeful there will be interest," he said. He suggests the rink could possibly even be set up inside a building or a facility and that would take care of any bad weather concerns.

■ **HISTORY:** NPC plans to redevelop up to four former power-plant buildings

New life for old Falls power plants

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

Niagara Parks Commission has plans to attract investors interested in redeveloping up to four former power-plant buildings in Niagara Falls.

It's unclear at this stage what the facilities will be used for, but they are in the care and stewardship of Niagara Parks, said chairwoman Janice Thomson.

"We're hoping to be able to preserve them as they are — the outside appearance," she said following the commission's last meeting of 2015.

"When the power companies built them initially, they were only able to do it on the condition that they ... have some kind of grandeur that blended into the parks and complemented the parks."

"It's our intention that ... the look of them be retained as they are, but that they be repurposed for some other public use."

Thomson is referring to the old Toronto Power Generating Station and the Rank-

ine Generating Station (built for Canadian Niagara Power Co.), which are across the street from each other along the Niagara Parkway.

There's also the Ontario Power Company Generating Station, which is the hydro facility in the Niagara Gorge, as well as the Niagara Gate House, which is across from Dufferin Islands.

All of the buildings are now closed.

"The plants are listed as an asset under our jurisdiction," said John Lohuis, general manager of the parks commission.

"Those assets need to be properly managed. The state of repair, the ultimate use, is within our operational context, and, therefore, the mechanisms and alternatives that are open to the commission need to be fully examined in order to carry out the care and attention that these buildings deserve."

Thomson said the commission has held a planning exercise through which senior staff and commissioners

talked about ideas and potential future uses of the buildings.

A consultant is also working on the project, she said.

"It was trying to just spark imagination and guide us to the decision made, which was that we would go for an international input. We'll do a request for interest, and it will be a worldwide opportunity," said Thomson.

"We know ... you really have one chance to do this right. You can't go out and maybe get a couple of responses and let it fizzle and then try it again. You have to go out with your best presentation."

She said the parks commission is securing the buildings and making sure they have properly evaluated their condition, "that we know exactly what it is that we would be offering proponents, so that when the opportunity goes out, it's a full package."



NIKE ORATISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK
With the Fallsview development in the background, the old Toronto Power Generating Station along the Niagara Parkway in Niagara Falls is one of four former power-plant buildings that the Niagara Parks Commission is hoping to redevelop.

Thomson said whether one, more or all of the power-plant buildings are redeveloped will be determined as the process unfolds.

"We've heard lots of ideas around museums, but it would have to be some kind of active museums that included an inside attraction relating to power, perhaps," she said.

"There's a vision that has to be developed and that's the stage we're just getting to at."

The Toronto Power Generating Station was built in 1906

and was decommissioned in the 1970s. Parks Canada designated the building as a national historic site in 1983 for its importance to early power generation and its style of architecture.

"We have opportunities there to get some grant funding to help us do this work," said Thomson.

The parks commission will submit an application to the National Historic Sites cost-sharing program to help with potential conservation work.

"We want to retain the heritage. Niagara Falls has such an important tie to power, and power generation itself, and we've been entrusted with the future of these structures," said Thomson.

"I think it's important that we maintain them, for the interpretation of power's history, or ... maybe it's a totally different type of attraction."

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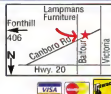
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Neonics debate has beekeepers buzzing

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Farmers are feeling the sting from provincial government limits on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.

By 2017, the Ontario government wants an 80 per cent reduction of neonicotinoid in treated corn and soybean seeds.

Some beekeepers in Niagara and across the country are pushing to end the use of the pesticide, also known as neonics.

George Scott of Port Colborne, managing director of Niagara Beeway, believes neonics kill pests that destroy crops — and also bees and birds.

Neonics are insecticides that affect the central nervous system of insects. They paralyze the insect, which dies soon after exposure. The pesticide can be used as a spray or a seed coating.

Currently, farmers are allowed to use up to 50 per cent of their seeds coated in neonics. To use more, they must sign an affidavit saying their crops will be threatened by pests, such as grubs and wireworms. One problem farmers face is predicting pest problems months in advance.

"Aphids are a really big problem here every other year or third year ... If they don't have that little bit of chemical on the seed to suppress the aphid pressure, if we do get aphids again next summer, we are going to have to go on broad scale and spray to kill the aphids," said Jerry Winnicki, agronomy manager at Clark Agri Service.

"If the aphids are attacking our crop, we have no choice."

Cynthia Scott-Dupree, a professor at University of Guelph with a PhD in biological sciences and agriculture, called neonics a "very valuable set of insecticides."

"Farmers have to buy their seed treated in October of the year before they start growing. How in October of 2015 can you predict what your pest pressure is going to be in May of 2016?" she said.

Scott-Dupree said if comparing neonic seed treatments to the conventional way of applying insecticide by doing a full spray, the seed treatment is much more effective.

When pesticides are sprayed, she said, it can drift into different areas and the amount of product used is much more than in a seed treatment.

Scott-Dupree has done field studies with canola crop and the affect neonics has on bees. She said in a field study, they look for risk — how many bees will die from exposure. Her research has shown there aren't high losses of bees related to canola.

She said she doesn't doubt that in the right dosage, neonics will kill honey bees.

She said researchers need to take their laboratory findings into the field, into realistic situations to see the impact.

"The problem is that a lot of the stories you hear and a lot of propaganda, if you will, from (non-governmental organizations) is generated on information only from laboratory studies — that's where you see toxicity.

"Sometimes these people are treating

the bees at eight times, 20 times, 200 times the dose they might be exposed to in the field. So of course, you're going to get negative effects," Scott-Dupree said.

Scott, a beekeeper, said he is often asked to talk about the effect neonics have on bees. He said in one study, there were 10 bees — five were given a virus, and the other five were given a virus and exposed to neonics — the same exposure the bees would have in the environment.

Only one bee died from the five that were not exposed to neonics. From the five that were exposed, none of the bees survived. Scott said when they tested the bees for neonics, it wasn't present in the bee that died.

Scott said of the bees that are dying of viruses, researchers can't be sure that's what is killing them, but the neonics are breaking down the bees' immune systems.

"That's like going into an AIDS ward and saying that person didn't die of AIDS, that person died of pneumonia — AIDS didn't really kill anyone, unless you pull their immune system down," Scott said.

Niagara beekeeper Walter Zimmerman doesn't agree with Scott and others who argue neonics are killing bees.

"In short, it's all nonsense ... there's one word that covers everything in beekeeping and that's called management," he said.

Zimmerman said there are as many management practices as there are beekeepers, and a big part of bee survival is the way people manage their hives.

If people aren't treating their bees for viruses and bacteria, he said, their bees will die.

Zimmerman said there are a number of reasons bees die. The varroa destructor mite, for example, is a vector for diseases and viruses. Zimmerman said some of the symptoms of the viruses are identical to pesticide poisoning.

"So when you have a newbie, or somebody with less experience or doesn't tend to their bees and doesn't have the knowledge, they will not know this and they will listen to hand-me-down information and talk it on neonics," Zimmerman said.

Zimmerman said his hives are located near a farm that uses neonics and he's never had a problem with his bees. He said he urges beekeepers to communicate with farmers to find out the risks before placing their beehives on or near a farm.

"Every single seed out west, since the development of neonics, has been coated with neonics — there have been no losses," said Zimmerman.

The science and technology isn't available yet to provide a good alternative for farmers. Scott would like to see more small-scale farming as a more alternative to the use of neonics. He said large-scale farming causes the need for pesticides.

Scott-Dupree said there needs to be time for science to catch up with the ideology.

Right now, she said, "the government is forcing the growers' hand in this direction when they don't really have the tools to do what they need to do," she said.

According to an Ontario government discussion paper titled *Pollinator Health: A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario*, Health Canada's Pest Management Regula-

tory Agency has said the "current agricultural practices related to the use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seed are affecting the environment."

The PMRA said the effect is being caused because of the

impact on bees and other pollinators. The current use of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seeds is not sustainable, the agency said.

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IN BRIEF

Children's choir holding auditions

Auditions for the second half of the season for the Chorus Niagara Children's Choir will be held Jan. 6. The choir consists of a training choir for children under 10 and a concert choir for children 11 and up. The two groups perform together and separately, and have

shared the stage with Chorus Niagara and Niagara Symphony Orchestra.

Rehearsals are held every Wednesday at Beacon School, 300 Scott St., St. Catharines. The training choir rehearses from 5 to 5:45 p.m., followed by a joint rehearsal with the concert choir until 6:15 p.m. The concert choir then rehearses on their own until 7 p.m. To book an audition, phone

905-601-9014.

Brock seeks youth for committee

Brock University is looking for some youthful perspective in a new committee.

The Brock Healthy Youth program is seeking Niagara-based volunteers ages 14 to 24 to sit on that committee to help researchers explore issues faced through adolescence.

A Brock release says "B-HYP" is about to begin its first research program through which it will follow more than 3,000 Niagara youths over seven years.

Research will explore the way mental and physical health interact during adolescence. The committee will help researchers determine everything from questions to ask, how to best present data, connecting with youth and issues to focus on.

The release says youth on the committee will be a part of ground breaking research, while gaining volunteer experience and hours.

Other benefits include a reference letter, experience for a resume, opportunities for honorariums and other incentives.

For more information, or to apply, visit www.brocku.ca/bhyp.

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■ MUSIC

Duran Duran coming to Fallsview

Postmedia Network

Duran Duran has a date at Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort.

One of the biggest bands of the 1980s will play the Avalon Ballroom March 25 and 26.

Tickets start at \$125 and go on sale at noon Friday.

Among the band's iconic early '80s hits are *Hungry Like the Wolf*, *Girls on Film* and *Rio*. They were an essential part of MTV's rise, and their

brand of art school pop has influenced several bands over the past three decades.

The band's current lineup is all original: Simon Le Bon, Nick Rhodes, John Taylor and Roger Taylor.

In September the band released *Paper Gods*, its first album in five years.

Tickets are available at the Fallsview Box Office (on any show date) and all Ticketmaster outlets. www.ticketmaster.ca



SAKURA/VIEWPOINT

Duran Duran heads to Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort March 25 and 26.

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LOCAL NEWS

■ **NEW YEAR'S EVE:** Proven performers signed at the last minute for Niagara Falls show

Concert a 'throwback' with Cochrane, DeYoung

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

This year's scaled down New Year's Eve show at Queen Victoria Park in Niagara Falls is bringing back some familiar faces.

Tom Cochrane, former Styx singer Dennis DeYoung and Alan Doyle of Great Big Sea will all play the annual free concert Dec. 31. All three have played the outdoor show before, but this time there will be no national TV audience.

After six broadcasts, Global opted out this year when it couldn't pry more money from the city and its tourism partners to foot the bill. Last year's show, with headliner Keith Urban, cost \$3 million to produce.

Global officially pulled out Nov. 19 after months of fruitless negotiations. It forced organizers to scramble to find entertainers without the budget or scale of recent shows.

Niagara Falls mayor Jim Diodati calls this year a "throwback" show with proven crowd-pleasing acts.

The alternative was no show at all.

"They've got a track record here, and they were a good fit for Niagara Falls," he said. "They know what to expect and we know what to expect."

Rounding out the lineup



Tom Cochrane.

are Toronto rockers Down With Webster, who have been nominated for six Juno Awards since 2010.

Cochrane last played New Year's Eve in Niagara Falls 20 years ago. He was inducted into the Canadian Music Industry Hall of Fame last year, and released his 14th album, *Take It Home*, in February.

Dennis DeYoung headlined the 2007 New Year's Eve show.

"Obviously it will be a scaled back production, and

the stage won't be as it was in the past," said Diodati. "And in terms of the night, they're only one way to see it, and that's to go down and do it live."

Diodati said the show was difficult to arrange this year after the Global deal fell apart, with final contracts not signed until Wednesday — 15 days before New Year's Eve.

"It doesn't help when you don't have a nationally broadcast show because that's one of the selling features to playing New Year's Eve in Niagara

CRAN GLOVER/THE LONDON FREE PRESS

Falls," he said. "But we are satisfied we got some solid acts."

He added the show will be back on TV next year. A new long-term contract with a national broadcaster will be announced early in 2016.

"It's going to be a little more geared to the locals this year," he stressed. "It's a step back to jump forward. When people see what we're proposing for next year, they're going to understand."

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■ **MUSIC**

Deadmau5 hints at retirement

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

Does retirement loom for Niagara Falls-born music producer Joel Zimmerman, a.k.a. Deadmau5?

Some cryptic tweets and a brief response to Postmedia Network seem to indicate the 34-year-old EDM star is ready to take a prolonged break from the business, if not walk away altogether.

Last Wednesday, Zimmerman told his 3.3 million Twitter followers that he was "considering killing off the 'deadmau5' bull-t and just start something new. Did it before, can do it again."

He later elaborated "branding is money, money is happiness. Running this s--- show while being as 'opinionated' as I am isn't fun anymore."

He dismissed the notion of "rebranding," saying "I'm talking about disappearing altogether."

It capped a volatile week on Twitter for Zimmerman in which he was mired in heated exchanges with EDM artists Gashly and Marshmello. Earlier this year, Zimmerman and longtime friend Skrillex fired several harsh messages at each other over Twitter. Five years earlier, Zimmerman helped Skrillex gain a foothold in the industry when his label Mau5trap released his album *Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites*.

On Thursday, the Deadmau5 Twitter account removed all messages posted after Aug. 22. His

account was set to "protected," and as a result the blue check — indicating the Twitter page as verified — was removed.

When contacted by The Review about his plans for 2016, Zimmerman replied: "Not doing anything ... playing video games, watching Netflix, and occasionally going out for drives. That's my plan."

He would not elaborate on talk of retirement or dropping the Deadmau5 identity.

If Zimmerman is indeed walking away from the Deadmau5 persona, it would end a remarkable 10-year stretch in which he went from the clubs of Niagara Falls to major arenas across the world. He was a huge part of EDM's mainstream acceptance, becoming the first Canadian artist to headline the Rogers Centre in 2011 and landing the cover of *Rolling Stone* in 2012.

Deadmau5 has won three Juno Awards and been nominated for six Grammy Awards. He's ranked No. 25 on this year's list of Top 100 DJs — a list he despises — by *DJ Magazine*. He ranked as high as No. 4 in 2010 and 2011.

Zimmerman's last show in his hometown was New Year's Eve 2012 at Scotiabank Convention Centre. He made an appearance at the 2014 Niagara Music Awards, accepting a Lifetime Achievement Award and handing out several other awards.

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